

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

In the Office Action, claims 1-12 were allowed, and claims 13-36 were rejected. In this response, claims 1, 13, 21, 22, 33, and 36 are amended. Accordingly, claims 1-36 remain pending.

Docket Number

Please update the docket number from S1022.81104US00 to **118264-162804**.

Claim Amendments

As noted above, claims 1, 13, 21, 22, 33, and 36 are amended. The amendments to claims 1, 21, 22, and 33 are minor in nature and/or merely conform said claims to the amendments to claim 13. Support for the amendments to claims 1, 13, and 36 can be found throughout the specification as originally filed. Accordingly, no new matter has been introduced.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102 (Kim)

Claims 13-26 and 30-36 were rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,445,616 issued to Kim (hereinafter “Kim”). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections at least with respect to the claims as amended.

Independent claim 13, as amended, is directed to a sense amplifier for a memory cell, comprising:

a first transistor having a first conducting terminal coupled to a reference memory cell and a second conducting terminal for connection to a supply voltage;

a second transistor, connectable to the memory cell, said first transistor and said second transistor each having a controllable resistance; and

a control circuit coupled to a control input of the first transistor, to a control input of the second transistor, and to the first conducting terminal of the first transistor such that the control circuit applies a control voltage to the control input of the first transistor in response to a voltage of the first conducting terminal, wherein the control circuit controls the first transistor to provide a reading current to the reference memory cell, wherein the reading current passes through both the reference and the first transistor at the same time.

(Emphasis added). Thus, the claimed sense amplifier includes a control circuit coupled to not only a control input of the first transistor but also to a control input of the second transistor.

Kim fails to teach or suggest the claimed sense amplifier. In the Office Action, it is asserted that Kim's read cell bit line voltage controller 950 and transistor NM2 read on the claimed control circuit and first transistor, respectively. See Office Action, p. 2. Even if one were to assume, just for argument's sake, that both assertions are correct, one could not also say that Kim's read cell bit line voltage controller 950 is coupled a control input of transistor NM2 and also to a control input of a second transistor connectable to the memory cell.

Accordingly, claim 13 is allowable over Kim at least because Kim cannot be said to teach each and every recitation thereof. Claims 14-26 and 30-36 depend for claim 13, either directly or via one or more intervening claims, and thus, also are allowable over Kim for at least the same reason claim 13 is allowable.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103 (Kim/Pasotti)

Claims 28 and 29 were rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over Kim in light of U.S. Patent 6,535,428 issued to Pasotti et al. (hereinafter “Pasotti”).

As discussed herein, independent claim 13 is allowable over Kim. Claims 28 and 29 depend from claim 13, and thus, also are allowable over Kim for at least the same reason claim 13 is allowable over Kim.

Pasotti fails to remedy the deficiency of Kim. At a minimum, Pasotti fails to teach or suggest a sense amplifier including a control circuit coupled to not only a control input of a first transistor but also to a control input of a second transistor. Therefore, claims 28 and 29 are patentable over Kim even if Kim were combined with Pasotti.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-36 are in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

It is noted that claimed subject matter may be patentably distinguished from the cited references for reasons in addition to those set forth herein, reasons such as those articulated in papers previously submitted regarding the subject application or related applications. Likewise, it is noted that the Applicants' failure, if any, to comment directly upon any of the positions asserted in the Office Action does not indicate tacit agreement or acquiescence with those asserted positions.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge shortages or credit overpayments to Deposit Account No. 500393.

Respectfully submitted,

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